

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 337 406

SO 021 564

AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
TITLE Social Development and the Curriculum.
PUB DATE Jul 91
NOTE 17p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.)
(120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Development; Current Events; *Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Human Dignity; Intergroup Relations; *Self Concept; Skill Development; *Social Development; Social Problems; *Student Attitudes; Student Educational Objectives; *Student Needs; Teaching Methods; World Problems

ABSTRACT

Teachers and administrators need to select objectives for student achievement in social development. Teachers need to follow definite educational psychology standards in helping students work toward objectives. In the classroom, students should have the opportunity to work with learners from diverse racial groups and socioeconomic levels. Educators should work to remedy the evil of discrimination that is rampant in the societal arena. With teacher guidance, students can analyze news broadcasts for accuracy. To achieve empathy, students should visit the ill. To achieve the objective of deploring violence, students need to acquire understanding of minority groups, diverse cultures, and the self. Teachers must provide learning opportunities to rid students of hostility toward other cultural groups and of ethnocentrism. To obtain an adequate self-concept, students need to be successful learners. An improved self-concept will render students better able to interact with others positively to remedy the evils of society. Objectives for student achievement and the means for reaching those objectives are outlined and discussed. It is concluded that attention to the developmental needs of students is an important area of focus for school teachers and administrators. (DB)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED337406

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE CURRICULUM

Marlow Ediger

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

☐ Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

MARLOW
EDIGER

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

80 021 564

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE CURRICULUM

Students achieving vital goals in social development is salient. In the school setting, in the societal arena, and on the international scene, quality feelings and attitudes must prevail. The consequences can be grave indeed if negative beliefs about others are in the offing. Alienation, vehement disagreements, and strife might well be an end result. The ultimate in strife is war with its ensuing deaths, injuries and maiming, as well as destruction of land and property. Anxiety and extreme tension are further products.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Teachers and administrators need to select relevant objectives for student achievement in social development. Each objective needs careful scrutiny. Broad goals for student achievement might well include the following:

1. developing feelings of acceptance and respect toward all peoples, regardless of beliefs, values, and culture.
2. wanting to know more about people in diverse nations. Thus significant facts, concepts, and generalizations pertaining to diverse geographical regions, history of different nations, systems of government, economic systems, and cultures must become an inherent part of stated objectives.
3. understanding basic needs of people, such as necessary food, clothing, shelter, and safety. These basic needs must be met for human beings to survive. Going beyond survival needs makes for

- increased achievement in science and mathematics, as well as all bodies of organized knowledge.
4. being able to work effectively with others in committees and larger group settings.
 5. developing empathy for others, regardless of the setting, be it locally, nationally, or internationally.
 6. deploring violence in all of its manifestations. Each student needs to develop criteria pertaining to living in a totally nonviolent manner.
 7. working toward eliminating feelings of hatred toward others. Feelings of hatred and dislike are harmful toward the self and relationships toward others.
 8. ridding oneself of feelings of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism, as a way of life, maximizes one's own cultural superiority and minimizes human beings who lack this culture.
 9. attaining an adequate self-concept so as to achieve optimally in school and in society. Using concepts of possessing adequate self-concepts to assist others to do well locally, nationally and internationally is vital.
 10. realizing the necessity for the futility of war and its means to settle disputes. In war, the stronger nation militarily becomes the victor. However, the victor here may fail miserably when measuring their standards with that of the good, the true, and the beautiful.

The above objectives are extremely difficult for any student to achieve, no doubt impossible. But, a start or beginning needs to occur.

ACHIEVING RELEVANT OBJECTIVES

The classroom teacher needs to follow definite standards from the psychology of education to guide optimal student achievement. Thus, students need to experience:

1. interesting learning opportunities.
2. meaningful knowledge and skills.

3. balance in the curriculum so that attitudinal goals become salient in order that knowledge and skills ends may be achieved more optimally.
4. perceived purpose so that acceptance of worthwhile tasks, lessons, and units of instruction is in evidence.
5. provision for individual differences so that fast, average, and slow achievers may attain as much as abilities permit.

Students in the classroom setting need to have ample opportunities to work in committees with learners from diverse racial groups and socio-economic levels. Each committee needs to achieve definite goals pertaining to feelings of an adequate self concept and respect for others. In society, discrimination occurs rather rampantly. The school setting must try to remedy and modify evils in the societal arena. The effects of discrimination can well be noted with the following article¹

The adverse effects of poverty and the dissolution of the two-parent family are taking their toll on substantial numbers of young children, according to two reports released here recently.

A report from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that nearly half the nation's black children live below the poverty line.

Using census data and comparing trends across regions, the study states that the deepening of poverty was most pronounced for black children living in the Northeast and Midwest, where the overall poverty rate increased between 1969 and 1984, as did the proportion of those classified as dependent on public aid.

While the overall poverty rate of black children in the South fell during the same period, the study "paints a deeply disturbing portrait of the risks and prospects confronting black American children," said the center's president, Eddie Williams.

Children under age 3 are most adversely affected, the study found.

"Not only is their poverty rate higher than for older children, it is also the fastest rising," states the report, which notes that by 1984, more than half of black children under age 3 were poor.

Minority groups tend to be the last hired from a pool of applicants, the first fired, and the largest percent being in penal institutions as compared to the dominant group (whites) in society.

To know and understand people better in other areas and regions of the world, adequate content needs to come from history and diverse social science disciplines such as geography, sociology, anthropology, and economics. To believe and feel that one's culture is superior to that of other nations must be avoided entirely. Most nations, by any means, do not have the rich farm lands possessed by the United States. Nor do they have the petroleum reserves nor the metals and minerals found in the United States. Too frequently in the news media, people in third world countries, for example, are described as

1. irrational and superstitious.
2. violent and terroristic.
3. ignorant and unreliable.
4. dirty and deceitful.

These stereotypes need to be avoided. Rather, students need opportunities to interact with others from different foreign nations, especially third world countries. Interaction means to truly learn from others why selected beliefs are held and adhered to, be it beliefs in religion,

customs, values, and culture. Students also need to learn about foods eaten, kinds of clothing worn, and types of shelters in evidence in third world nations. The following indicates a stereotyped idea of others and the negative consequences thereof:

At first the words stung Amal Berry.
"Traitor-go back to where you came from!"

Ms. Berry, who was born in Lebanon, emigrated to the United States in 1976. As far as she's concerned, she's American - and as an American, she said last week, she has a right to continue protesting against the Persian Gulf war. Ms. Berry is among several members of the Arab Student Association here at the University of Michigan at Dearborn who have chosen to take a public stand against the war.

In Dearborn, with the largest Arab population of any American city, many Arab-American students said last week that the war was deeply distracting and saddening. Some said it had been a harsh reminder that most Americans have little understanding of the Arab world. The students noted that tensions had increased on the campus, and they worried that the worst was yet to come.

During the Iraq war, on National Public Broadcasting Service, KBIA, Columbia, Missouri, February 1, 1991, an airman described the Iraqi theater of operations in the following way:

The Iraqi's are like cockroaches. The sky lights up (from American bombing), the enemy soldiers come out to be killed like cockroaches.

The enemy in any war can be portrayed in vicious ways. Thus during World War II, the Japanese were portrayed in cartoons as having buck teeth, slanted eyes, and hari-kari (suicidal) in military ventures. Euphemisms are invented to portray vicious acts of the United States in kind terms:

1. soldiers killed by "friendly fire."
2. bombing enemy targets represents "protective reaction."
3. enemy civilians hurt in war are collective collateral.

To achieve the objectives of understanding basic needs of people such as food, clothing, shelter, and security, students need to observe and discuss audio-visual content pertaining to poverty situations in third world nations. Students with teacher guidance should have opportunities to observe street people in the United States who lack even the basic necessities of life. In rural areas, extreme poverty is even more in existence than urban centers. Hunger, shabby clothing, slum shelters be it inner city or rural, and violence are there to see.

The writer from 1952-54 taught students and did relief work on the West Bank of the Jordan, then the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan, and now called the "occupied territories," a vague term in news broadcasts. In the 1967 six day war, Israel captured the West Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan. The writer first whitewashed caves and homes of Palestinian Arab refugees from the 1948 Arab-Israeli wars. Approximately, 700,000 Palestinians became refugees then. The writer also distributed clothing in two Palestinian refugee camps, Aqaba (40,000 refugees) located directly south of Jericho and Ein Sultan (38,000 refugees) living directly north of Jericho.

Clay huts, row after row, with no sanitation facilities made for squalor, extreme poverty, and hopelessness.

Wars fought after 1948 have made for a total of 2.3 million Palestinian refugees. The tragedies of a lack of the necessities of life were witnessed first hand.

Students with teacher guidance continually need to study, read, and analyze news broadcasts in terms of accuracy. The following must be followed in the analyzation process:

1. From whose point of view are the news items presented? Are they friends or enemies of the United States?
2. Which names are utilized to describe friends, e.g. democratic, freedom fighters, and patriotic. Which names are used to describe the enemy side, e.g. guerillas, terrorists, and anarchists.
3. Why does the United States favor one side as compared to the other?
4. What affects does favoring one side (Israel) have on the other side (the Palestinians)?
5. How does having friends and having enemies affect the human rights dimension? Social development of students?

To attain the ability to work effectively with others, students need to have ample practice in committee and classroom endeavors. Students should work on projects and activities with others of diverse levels of achievement, mental maturity, socio-economic groups, and different races. Rules need to guide the small group and class as a whole work. The rules or objectives need to be the focal point of instruction. Periodically, students need to evaluate if the ends are being achieved. Respect and acceptance of others

are key concepts to emphasize. No one should feel discrimination or being left out of active class and school teaching-learning situations.

To achieve well with empathy for others, students need to visit classmates in homes and in hospitals when illness occurs. Learners need to put themselves into the shoes of the ill. Reading and discussing library books pertaining to the impaired (hearing, vision, and orthopedic, among others) are salient goals of instruction. Visiting senior citizens centers and nursing homes provide further opportunities to understand and feel with others who, in this case, suffer the consequences of old age. Younger individuals might also be housed in nursing homes, such as those having suffered a massive stroke. Learners need to understand what it is like to be in senior citizens' centers, and even more so in nursing homes. Perhaps, a kinder, gentler American can be an end result.

To achieve the objective pertaining to deploring violence in society, students need to view first hand ghetto and slum areas. Learners must talk to individuals in these situations and listen carefully to what is being said. Students should have opportunities to make comparisons of an extremely low income area with that of wealthy socio-economic neighborhoods. In making these comparisons, students will notice:

1. squalor versus the fabulous.

2. dangerous areas versus well guarded places to protect extreme wealth.
3. rat/mouse infested slums versus large, expensive mansions.
4. poorly dressed people versus extravagant apparel of the wealthy.
5. old, dilapidated cars versus a fleet of expensive automobiles, equipped with all extras available for a single owner.
6. no yard space versus spacious, irrigated lawns with beautiful flowers and shrubs.
7. many unemployed people versus high income executives and professionals.

Students need to have ample opportunities to notice concrete situations pertaining to income and wealth discrepancies of the poor versus the wealthy. Discussions in depth should follow. Reading materials and audio-visual aids involving diverse socio-economic levels should guide students further to understanding people. Discussion needs to be in evidence pertaining to how poverty fosters drug abuse, crime, and violence. Goals need establishing by students with teacher guidance on means to eliminate/minimize violence in the societal arena. Letters could be written to governmental officials on ways to curb causes of violence. Causes, not the symptoms only, need to be examined and remedied.

To attain the goal of ridding the self of feelings of hatred toward others requires understanding of minority groups, diverse cultures, and the self. Students need to acquire knowledge of causes of hatred. Discussions emphasizing what the individual hates and why are salient. Hating destroys the self and others. It hinders thinking

about what represents goodness, truthfulness, and the beautiful. The ugliness of hatred appears in picturing others as evil and wicked. Egocentrism emphasizes that the perceiver is superior and excellent. Feelings of dislike are learned and minimizes others. Stereotypes of others developed by the perceiver involve the following:

1. being genetically inferior.
2. having evil religious beliefs.
3. lacking truth and trustfulness.
4. maintaining traits of greed and shrewdness.
5. possessing traits of being inherently evil.

To achieve objectives of ridding the self of negative hostile feelings toward others, the teacher needs to provide a variety of learning opportunities. Students need to examine, in depth, their feelings toward diverse cultural groups. How much of a democracy any nation has depends upon the feelings of people toward others. Any nation can have a national constitution and bill of rights. The constitution and bill of rights may mean nothing unless people have positive feelings toward each other. For example, a constitution can guarantee equal protection under the law to all citizens. And yet, a street person or individual living in poverty does not experience equal protection under the law. Or, an individual may live in a violence prone area and experience fears, dangers, deaths of friends and loved ones. Equal protection of the law in these situations, as a constitutional guarantee has little to do with life in and of itself. Negative situations, such as those mentioned,

are experienced by a large percentage of the population; they are not isolated cases.

Teachers, first of all, need to be free of hatreds towards others. They need to assist students to develop positive feelings. Wars and their consequences, no doubt, tend to motivate people to truly show negative feelings toward others.

During the United States-Iraq war, the following posters appeared on bulletin boards throughout a university campus:

Support America
Join in an Anti-Iraq Demonstration
Tuesday, January 29, 1991
on the mall in front of the Student Union Building
3:30 p.m.

In the United States, to be patriotic, one must hate and fight the enemy. One who advocates peace and wants peaceful solutions to conflicts is not patriotic. And yet wars with their consequences have tragic effects. The dead makes for widows and widowers at a young age. Young children can become orphans. Parents grieve over their lost son or daughter, if they truly care about their offspring. Mental scars are left of many who come back from battle.

Instead of spending on war, money needs to be spent on schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, community buildings, and factories. What provides for human beings should become

first priority. Human beings need better education, nutrition, housing, jobs, and health care.

Students need guidance to resolve conflicts using peaceful means. Disagreements among classmates need to be solved through discussion and consensus.

To achieve goals pertaining to minimizing feelings of ethnocentrism, students need to achieve vital objectives pertaining to diverse cultures. Basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter must be met for all human beings. The kinds and types of these basics will vary from culture to culture. Thus how the basic needs will be met emphasizes diversity. Feelings of superiority then are minimized. Each human needs to have basic needs met. Students must learn to accept people from other cultures. Otherwise, violent disagreements might come about between and among local inhabitants, states, or nations. Ultimate disagreements lead to physical violence and property destruction. The following materials as learning opportunities might well assist students to learn much pertaining to other cultures: textbooks, library books, films, filmstrips, video-tapes, video-disks, single concept film loops, slides, pamphlets, pictures, study prints, software, and charts. Individual differences among students need to be provided for.

To attain an adequate self concept as an objective of instruction, students need to be successful learners.

Feelings of failure in learning opportunities should be omitted. Objectives need to be achievable by students. Learning opportunities to attain each objective need to be meaningful, purposeful, provide for individual differences, and secure learner interests. Evaluation to ascertain what students have learned should be diagnostic, not punitive, to determine what needs to be taught so that students may successfully achieve sequential objectives.

With a more adequate self concept, students may be better able to enjoy and appreciate positive interactions with other learners, regardless of race, creed, religion, or national origin. Predjudices and biases need to be eliminated. They bring hostile feelings toward others resulting in feelings of hatred, dislike and violence. Predjudices and biases might ultimately bring in conflicts resulting in wars with its military buildups, heavy bombing of nations, loss of life and injuries, blind right wing patriotism, destruction and demolition of buildings, censorship, distortion of truth, and anxiety. In the meantime, domestic problems in a nation grow with a lack of medical doctors on the homefront, outdated medical practices and equipment, dangerous roads and bridges, street people and poverty, neglected schools, and lagging improvement in manufacturing and in industry.

To achieve the goal of realizing the futility of war, the teacher needs to have students observe and discuss video-tapes, among other activities, on:

1. disabled veterans from wars.
2. gravesites of military personnel who died as a result of war.
3. mental problems of patients, resulting from war.
4. actual combat situations.
5. destruction of property and land due to war.

In an interview with Department of Energy experts, the following writeup records statements by involved specialists³:

The Vietnam War caused the destruction of one million acres of tropical rainforests. An area of 5.5 million acres, roughly the size of Vermont, was devastated by napalm attacks, bombs, and toxic weapons. The bombing created 25 million craters in the Earth, displacing enough soil to cover the State of Delaware to a dept of three feet. More than 19 million gallons of chemical herbicides were dumped to deforest the war zone, causing massive soil erosion.

IN CLOSING

Students need guidance to develop well socially when interacting with others. Interactions occur between and among all people, regardless of race, creed, or nation involved. Problem solving and conflict resolution must be emphasized in ongoing lessons and units in the curriculum. Each learner has a better opportunity then to develop, achieve, and grow in all facets of development.

SELECTED REFERENCES

1. Education Week, January 9, 1991. Washington, D.C., page 12.
2. The Chronicle of Higher Education, January 30, 1991. Dearborn, Michigan, page one.
3. Kirksville Daily Express, January 23, 1991. Kirksville, Missouri, page 2.